

Contents

Features

[Duty in
Germany](#)

[Supporting
Soldiers and
Families](#)

[A Choice
Community](#)

[Wurzburg High](#)

[The Army
Vision](#)

[Transforming
the Best Army
in the World](#)

[Focused on
Bosnia](#)

[Improving the
FMTV](#)

[Soldiers and the
FMTV:
Working Out the
Kinks](#)

[The FMTV
Pullout \(.pdf\)](#)

[The NTC
Support Team](#)



A TOUR in Germany used to mean being forward-deployed on "freedom's frontier," in the heart of "Cold War" country, not far from the borders of Warsaw Pact nations and the ever-present threat of communism. Soldiers stationed there knew full well what they were up against.

In those days, training focused on one contingency, a potential World War III that would involve hundreds of thousands of troops and massive amounts of heavy armor and firepower, for a long-lasting ground war.

With the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the end of the Cold War, former enemies now train together in Partnership for Peace exercises across the European continent. The places where U.S. soldiers once would never have set foot are now the places where they are keeping the peace. And the contingencies they train for have in recent years become increasingly frequent real-life missions, sending many Germany-based soldiers on repeated deployments throughout the European Theater.

ACROSS the Main River, Festung Marienberg -- a fortified hilltop castle constructed between 1200 and 1600 as home to the wealthy and powerful prince-bishops -- overlooks Wuerz-burg.

Germany's famed Romantic Road, studded with medieval towns, castles and churches, originates in the picturesque Baroque city and continues for 260 miles to the Austrian border.

The city, home to the 1st Infantry Division, is one of the many places in Germany where U.S. soldiers and their families are welcomed with open arms. That's especially important today, when many Germany-based soldiers deploy often.

"The fact that we in Bavaria call the 1st Inf. Div. 'The Bavarian Division' speaks for itself," said Bavarian Minister-President Dr. Edmund Stoiber, who recently addressed U.S. soldiers and members of the German Bundeswehr at the annual state reception in Ansbach.



A cyclist crosses the bridge over the Main River in Wurzburg, home of the 1st Infantry Division.

"Today, Germany is grateful to every service member in the U.S. Army and the Bundeswehr for performing difficult duty in the Balkans, which is not without danger," Stoiber continued.

"This expression of thanks also goes to the families, who have to bear long separations from their loved ones," Stoiber said.

Jessica Archer's husband, SPC Randy Archer, from Headquarters and HQs. Company, 3rd Brigade, in Vilseck, recently trained at the Combat Maneuver Training Center in Hohenfels for the third time in six months -- preparing to go to Kosovo. "In August, he spent 10 days at home between training," she said.



Duty in Germany offers soldiers and their families the chance to tour some of Europe's greatest sites, including Würzburg's stately Residenz.

Archer said her husband doesn't see their four children much, because they're usually in bed when he arrives home at 8 or 9 p.m.

In Bamberg, Germany, Melissa Barnes' husband, SSG Bruce Barnes, a member of 3rd Bde., 82nd Engineer Battalion, was also training at Hohenfels, also in preparation for Kosovo.

Melissa and her husband have lived in Germany for six years. In 1997 she saw him only five weeks, when he came home from Bosnia, she said. "When he wasn't deployed out of country, he was in Hohenfels or Grafenwoehr," Germany's maneuver training areas, for three weeks at a time. Fortunately, not every year has been like that one.

SSG Franklin Blanche, a member of the battalion staff of the 793rd MP Bn. in Bamberg, is serving his third European tour in 12 years. "During the other two, I deployed only to train-up exercises," he said. "On this tour, within two years I'd been on two deployments. That doesn't include the train-ups.

"The average soldier here can expect to spend six months out of the year away from home station," Blanche said. He deployed to Kosovo for several months as a criminal investigator at Camp Bondsteel.

"Deployments are tough," said Blanche, who deployed to Bosnia in 1996 with the 630th MP Co. "But I have a strong, supportive wife. Not everyone does. Lately, we've seen a high percentage of separations and divorce. Now, when you even mention deployment, there are more repercussions before the deployment."

SSG Nathan Brookshire, a physical-security inspector with the 279th Base Support Bn. in Bamberg, deployed to Bosnia for seven months in 1997. He spent the three previous months attending the Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course.

1LT Heide Ulrich, a platoon leader with 3rd Corps Support Command's 240th Quartermaster Co. in Bamberg, was in Albania from April to August 1999.

"It was my first deployment," said Ulrich, who had taken over the platoon only two weeks earlier and suddenly was responsible for all the fuel for the task force.

Her unit set up two fuel "farms," with a 420,000-gallon capacity, collectively, and issued more than 1 million gallons of fuel.

In October, SPC Michael Bassett, a tanker from the 3rd Bde.'s 2nd Bn., 63rd Armor, in Vilseck, was preparing to deploy to Macedonia by Christmas. Even though his company's 14 tanks weren't expected to go with them, he was up to his elbows in grease keeping them in top-notch condition.

Earlier, his unit had trained at Hohenfels and Grafenwoehr, and had completed several road marches -- "something we don't typically do as tankers," Bassett said. "Because this is my first permanent duty station, I was still green when I arrived."



Providing a decent standard of living for soldiers' families is a prime USAREUR objective. Here SPC Randy Archer's wife, Jessica, shares time with her children.

His unit had been in the field roughly 80 percent of the time between February and June 1999, Bassett said. "I'm not so green anymore."

Similar stories of long absences are common across U.S. military installations in Germany. They affect virtually every unit and every MOS.

Their effect on individuals and families is as varied as the people themselves.

SSG Marion Jerdee, a platoon sergeant with the 11th Aviation Regiment's C Troop, 6th Squadron, 6th Cavalry, an AH-64 Apache attack helicopter unit in Illesheim, said, "This is major hell for a family." Her unit led British forces into Kosovo with KFOR's initial entry force in June, 1999.

"My husband's in the other attack squadron, the 2nd Sqdn., 6th Cav. We have a two-year-old daughter. And we recently separated," Jerdee said.

"We deploy at least once a year on a major deployment, plus practice gunnery," she said. "This unit, as a whole, hasn't quit training or deploying since I arrived two years ago."

Jerdee, who ensures scheduled and unscheduled maintenance is performed on the Apaches, said it's been difficult coming home to someone who experiences the same stresses she does because of the units' high OPTEMPO. "Korea was a piece of cake compared to this tour," she said.

"This place became a ghost town when everyone deployed," said SPC Damien Greenwell, a mailroom clerk from the 1st Bn., 77th Armor, in Schweinfurt, who was among the few soldiers in the rear in October, when most of his unit was still in Kosovo.



Despite the high OPTEMPO in Germany, 1st Inf. Div. commander MG John P. Abizaid said soldiers stationed there are making the most of their overseas tours, going where the



USAREUR-based soldiers undergo predeployment training at the Combat Maneuver Training Center in Hohenfels.

Army needs them to go, and making time to enjoy Germany when they can.

"The 1st Inf. Div. probably has the highest OPTEMPO of any division in the Army," Abizaid said.

"Surprisingly, it also has a high re-enlistment rate. That's testament to the fact these soldiers believe in what

they're doing. They enjoy what they're doing."

"For soldiers, it's rewarding to do real-life missions. And Army statistics show units that frequently deploy have higher retention rates than those that don't," said LTC Lou L. Marich. He commands Bamberg's 54th Engineer Bn., the unit that laid the now-famous bridge across the Sava River in December 1995, allowing the first U.S. ground troops into Bosnia.

The fact that many soldiers actually enjoy deploying is, however, often difficult for spouses to accept, said Chaplain (CPT) Robert Nay, a 1st Inf. Div. chaplain in Schweinfurt.

Every time a spouse deploys, the other one is suddenly alone again, said 2nd Bde. Chaplain (MAJ) Allen Kovach. Before, when he or she was tired, the other could step in and care for the children or prepare a meal.

"We can't say, 'You're going to have trouble when your soldier-spouse leaves and when he or she returns,'" said Chaplain (LTC) Glenn Davis, the 409th Base Support Bn. chaplain in Vilseck. "That doesn't always happen. But problems usually do come to the surface when marriages are weak or new."

"Of some 7,000 U.S. soldiers in Kosovo today, most are from the 1st Inf. Div., and roughly half are married," Kovach added.

"Being apart for anniversaries, birthdays and other special occasions is sometimes more difficult for the younger soldiers," Kovach said. In Kosovo, Bosnia and Macedonia, "we try to help the soldiers by giving them a place to worship and someone to talk to about their feelings. And we give them encouragement," he said.

Before Christmas, 1st Inf. Div. mailroom clerks worked overtime trying to keep up with holiday mail and equipment being returned early by redeploying soldiers. Yellow ribbons adorned fences, front doors and unit dayrooms. And people showed their support by donning tiny yellow-ribbon pins.

Meantime, Army Community Services representatives, who established the family assistance center when the first news of deployment came in March 1999, worked on welcome-home events. Family Advocacy Program representatives created a class called "Re-romancing Your Sweetie With Spirit."

Chaplains began conducting reunion briefings with spouses in the rear and soldiers downrange. And units planned individual welcome-home celebrations.



"The biggest challenge in Germany, where spouses are away from home and can feel isolated, is to get them to connect with family support groups," Davis said. "A lot of spouses live on the economy, and when they're isolated they have a harder time coping."



The shops, restaurants and historic sites of old-town Bamberg are familiar territory to the soldiers stationed nearby.

People tend to think about family support groups only before deployments, said Vilseck ACS Outreach Program coordinator Ed Lada. "But because our soldiers are often away from home station, for training, we meet once a month, year-round, to keep our families informed and address their needs." [See accompanying story on the 98th Area Support Group.]

"You'll always have some people who cling to the Army housing units, never venturing out into the country where they live," said Brookshire's wife, Melanie. "But a whole family can go many places here for as little as \$20. MWR offers special tours, and local bus and rail transportation is relatively inexpensive and very dependable."

Spouses often don't know what the Army has to offer, she said. If they lived off post in the states, they may never have had a reason to go on post. Everything they needed was at their fingertips at the local shopping centers.

"When I pick up new soldiers at the airport, I tell them that Bamberg is one of the most beautiful places on earth," said Brookshire, "and that the Bamberg military community has repeatedly earned Army Community of Excellence awards for its facilities and services."

"We've won awards not necessarily because our buildings and facilities are better than anyone else's, but because the people here regard the Bamberg military community as their hometown," said LTC Winston Lewis, commander of Bamberg's 279th BSB. "I tell soldiers and families that if they don't get what they need here, they should come and look for me."

"One of our strengths is the German nationals who are our liaison to the community. We hold cookouts and invite them. And they invite us to virtually every fest in town," Lewis said.

"The biggest difference for soldiers coming here is living in a country outside the United States, far from home," Marich said. "There are some challenges, among them frequent deployments and a higher cost of living in and around major cities."

There isn't a shopping mall in every town either, and gas stations and convenience stores aren't open 24 hours a day. For those reasons, "families in Germany have to be a little more organized. They can't wait until the last minute to do things," he said.



"I tell newly arrived soldiers that the language difference should be the least of their concerns," Marich added. "If you at least attempt to say 'Guten Morgen,' the Germans will come back and speak practically fluent English with you. They're required to study English from the fifth



PV2 Regina Swindle, a member of the Bamberg-based 317th Maint. Bn., repairs a TA312 telephone set.

grade on.

"The greatest opportunities for me as a soldier in Germany include going on real-world deployments, participating in partnership activities with German soldiers to discover how they do things, and training in a unique part of the world with soldiers from countries hoping to enter NATO," Marich added.

SFC Richard Nelson, NCOIC of Bamberg's 793rd MP Bn., said being stationed in Germany has been a very positive experience.

"I have special ties to Germany, through my wife, as do many other U.S. soldiers married to German nationals," he said. "We all want to stay and learn more about the beautiful country and its rich history and culture."

Nelson said that even with training and deployments, "soldiers do have time to travel." Virtually all of Europe is at their doorstep.

In December, several dozen Bamberg soldiers planned to spend Christmas with German families through a long-standing U.S. Army, Europe, program called "Operation Good Cheer."

"You can reach nine countries from here in eight hours or less, and they're all beautiful, even in winter," said SGT Kenneth Owens, a member of the 6th Bn., 52nd Air Defense Artillery, near Ansbach.

"And some of the largest things in the world are here -- the Frankfurt International Car Show, the Montrose Jazz Festival and Oktoberfest," said Owens, whose battalion returned from Incirlik, Turkey, in August.

"We have a lot of really great benefits," Nelson added, "including a 50-percent reduction on the cost of gasoline with our ID cards." And Germany's 16-percent value-added tax -- applied to purchases over 100 Deutsch Marks, including things like auto repairs -- doesn't apply to soldiers' purchases.

With housing paid for, some families manage to save a considerable amount of money. And while soldiers are deployed for contingency operations they draw hazardous duty pay, \$350 per month for the period of time they're deployed, typically six months or more. They also earn \$2 per day separation pay.

Pilots and crew chiefs collect aviation career incentive pay, in addition to hazardous duty pay, which ranges from \$125 to \$840 per month, said LTC David Abramowitz, commander of Task Force Gunfighter, the aviation task force currently in Kosovo.

"When soldiers re-enlist in a tax-free environment, their entire re-enlistment bonus is tax-free as well," said LTC Kurt Lambert, commander of the 6th Bn., 52nd ADA.

While the Army wrestles with frequent deployments and the effects of downsizing, Abizaïd said, "the nature of the Army is that you have to constantly train because of the flux of soldiers and leaders with each summer rotation.

"What we got ready for six months ago, isn't what we need to get ready for today," Abizaïd added. "Kosovo's a prime example. First we thought we'd have to go in

fighting. Then we learned it was a peacekeeping mission. Later we realized the situation over there is much more dangerous than we thought."

Training is critical, Abizaid said, "but we have to make sure we're smart enough when we come back from a deployment to allow soldiers to be reintegrated into their families.

"We have to train our soldiers on skills that disintegrated while they were on peacekeeping missions, but that doesn't mean they're training 300 days out of every year," Abizaid said. "People forget that even during World War II, we didn't keep soldiers on the line. We rotated them from front to rear.

"Our soldiers in Kosovo have been fired upon with mortars, recoilless rifles and small arms. They've had to pick up bodies and investigate murders. I don't anticipate them being reinstituted for six to nine months after they return from that challenging deployment," Abizaid said.

Some 65,000 U.S. soldiers are still forward-deployed in Europe 10 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, USAREUR officials said.

Given the ongoing threats to peace and stability in USAREUR's area of operations, the Army's presence in Europe -- and the challenges facing the soldiers stationed there -- are sure to continue.

[Back to the Top](#)

Contents

Features

[Duty in
Germany](#)

[Supporting
Soldiers and
Families](#)

[A Choice
Community](#)

[Wurzburg High](#)

[The Army
Vision](#)

[Transforming
the Best Army
in the World](#)

[Focused on
Bosnia](#)

[Improving the
FMTV](#)

[Soldiers and the
FMTV:
Working Out the
Kinks](#)

[The FMTV
Pullout \(.pdf\)](#)

[The NTC
Support Team](#)



AREA support groups in Germany provide deployed soldiers peace of mind that their families are OK, said 98th ASG spokesman Don Klinger.

Some 3,000 people make up the Wurzburg-based 98th ASG, which supports about 42,000 people, said Klinger. They are responsible for everything from housing maintenance and security to utilities, schools, clubs, daycare centers and morale, welfare and recreation services.



Family support groups within USAREUR ease the transition from stateside life to life in Europe, and help relieve the stress on the spouses of deployed soldiers.

The 98th ASG is the largest of three ASGs in Bavaria, in the number of troops it supports. Together with its base support battalions -- in Schweinfurt, Bamberg, Giebelstadt, Kitzingen, Illesheim and Ansbach -- the 98th supports soldiers and family members, as well as retirees and others eligible for such support.

"We're a society superimposed on another society, an apples-to-oranges, nuts-and-bolts organization that provides everything to the soldier and family member 24 hours a day, seven days a week," said Klinger. "Each BSB is different, based on its geographical area and tenant units."

"In the last year, every battalion in this brigade deployed to Macedonia or Kosovo. Two years ago they were deployed to Bosnia," said CPT David Reardon, the rear detachment representative for the 1st Infantry Division's 2nd Brigade.

"We formed the Family Support Rear Detachment Council that initially met daily, then twice weekly, to organize special events and services for those left behind," Reardon said.

"After the initial deployment of 2,200 of our soldiers in June, we realized a need for more school counselors to help our children face their mom's or dad's deployment," said LTC James Comish, commander of the 280th BSB in Schweinfurt. Chaplains, who normally would have heard the children's concerns, had all deployed with their units.



Würzburg Elementary School pupils have the same opportunities for mental and physical growth as their stateside peers.

"Department of Defense Education Association officials funded more counselors, a school psychologist and a clinical psychiatrist," Comish said. Army Reserve unit-ministry teams also augmented deployed chaplains.

Local German police conducted cooperative patrols in U.S. housing areas to alleviate security concerns before MPs could arrive to replace those who deployed, Comish added.

"Because our soldiers are constantly deploying to world hot spots, we have unit service coordinators -- typically a first sergeant or family liaison person -- at every unit to plan special events. They also conduct traveling 'road shows' that advertise what ACS offers," said Jo Eels, Schweinfurt's ACS director.

Eels said support personnel encourage spouses to remain in Germany rather than return to the United States when the soldier deploys, "because the support is here. This is where the people are who understand what you're going through," she said.

Soon after Teresa Reese's husband, 1st Bn., 77th Armor, commander LTC Timothy Reese, deployed to Kosovo, she helped form a cooperative with restaurants in the Schweinfurt area. "We got them to hold family nights, and we got theaters to show more family movies," Reese said.

On the U.S. military installation, businesses stayed in business, too, because family members were encouraged and enticed to use them. Clubs and bowling alleys sponsored children's events. And childcare was provided to give adults some much-needed time away from their children.

"A most difficult time was after the deaths of three soldiers in Kosovo," Reese reflected. Two died in vehicle accidents, the other was electrocuted.

Chaplain (CPT) Robert Nay, a 1st Inf. Div. chaplain in Schweinfurt, performed services for the soldiers who died. "Two of them were married," he said. "I had to go with the senior officer in the battalion to tell the wives and children."

Tragic as the deaths were, Reese said it drew the spouses of deployed soldiers closer.

Again ACS services helped. An ACS-provided computer program allowed soldiers and their spouses to see and talk to each other via video-gram.

A community homepage kept families abreast of what was happening in Kosovo, "so rear-detachment commanders heard about events,



When not deployed, many USAREUR-based soldiers come home to well-maintained barracks and comfortable rooms like this one in Vilseck.

including the fatalities, before CNN did," Reese said. Casualty working groups immediately formed to assist the bereaved families.

Simultaneously, ACS classes, programs and handouts addressed virtually every concern soldiers or families might have had, Eels said.

"Our goal is to empower family members or single soldiers to take charge of their lives. We do that by encouraging spouses to be productive while a loved one is deployed," said Eels. ACS offers free computer and language-skills training, and provides volunteer opportunities.

"Taking classes or volunteering brings spouses together with other adults experiencing similar circumstances, and teaches them new skills to make them more marketable," Eels said.

"Wives get depressed when they realize their husbands aren't coming home for dinner, night after night," said FAP chief Rachel Henry. When this happens, she said, some of them lose all motivation to care for themselves, their children or their homes.

"We're not punitive," said Henry. "We're just here to provide resources to those who need help." That help can come in the form of anger-management classes, family therapy, or a daytime trip for shopping or sightseeing.

[Back to the Top](#)

Contents

Features

[Duty in
Germany](#)

[Supporting
Soldiers and
Families](#)

[A Choice
Community](#)

[Wurzburg High](#)

[The Army
Vision](#)

[Transforming
the Best Army
in the World](#)

[Focused on
Bosnia](#)

[Improving the
FMTV](#)

[Soldiers and the
FMTV:](#)

[Working Out the
Kinks](#)

[The FMTV
Pullout \(.pdf\)](#)

[The NTC
Support Team](#)



LTC Stan Sims, commander of the 235th Base Support Battalion in Ansbach, Germany, tells his mother that he's the mayor of the five military communities under his jurisdiction, including four kasernes in Ansbach and Storck Barracks in nearby Illesheim.

Ansbach

"I want the Ansbach community to be the community of choice in U.S. Army, Europe. It's an area that boasts a lot of small-town, home-type communities, and a lot of little successes," he said. Ansbach has been a consistent top finisher in the Army Communities of Excellence program for the last five years.

"The Army trained me for 20 years to be a tactical intelligence officer, not a base operations commander. There's no such MOS," said Sims, who's served in every type of tactical unit and trained at all the familiar training areas.

"But what better person to do this job than someone who knows soldiers," he said. "I can take care of families the way I want my family to be taken care of.

"I've worked 20-hour days with those tactical units," Sims added. "I've spent time in Saudi Arabia, Haiti and Bosnia. But this is a tough job.

"I don't have to worry about deploying with my unit," he said. "All I have to worry about is providing the best possible quality of life to soldiers, family members, Department of the Army civilians and retirees in the Ansbach area."

Before the military drawdown in Europe, "we didn't have BSBs," Sims said. "The senior person in a unit was in charge of a community. When he or she deployed, someone else was appointed to take up the slack. That person wasn't always qualified or equipped to handle the job."



The Ansbach area is home to three of USAREUR's four AH-64 Apache attack helicopter battalions.

Ansbach and Illesheim together form the largest Army aviation community in Europe, Sims said. Seventy-five percent of the Army's aviation assets in Europe fall under the 235th.

"Three of the four AH-64 Apache battalions stationed in Europe -- plus aviation maintenance, air traffic control and air medevac units -- are in my community," Sims said. They are part of the 1st Infantry Division's 4th Aviation Brigade.

Supporting some 8,300 people, "we're similar in size to the Bamberg military community," said Sims, "but it is in only one location. We're spread over five kasernes.

"This will be one of the last communities in Europe to ever close down," Sims guessed. "We have airfields in Illesheim and Katterbach, and airfields are expensive to build."

The former home of the 1st Armored Division's 17,000 people, the military community is today half the size yet boasts plentiful housing and great schools. Ansbach Elementary School was rated the best Department of Defense school in Europe in 1999.

Housing is so plentiful in the community that there are virtually no waiting lists, Sims said. "In fact, we give quarters' keys to sponsors so they can take new families right from the airport to their homes."

Engineers just completed renovating the 10th building in a major housing renovation project. And all of the BSB's buildings, including barracks, are to be renovated by 2010.

The work includes the largest such project in USAREUR, Sims said -- a 225-person, seven-wing building in Katterbach that was built by the German air force in the 1930s.

Additionally, a teen center recently opened in Katterbach for the first time, in response to teens' requests.

And while all BSBs have small local training areas that allow soldiers to conduct small-unit training, "our training facilities, which include a MOUT village, are more robust because the 1st Armd. Div. was here," Sims said. "We're adding a fully automated M-16 range in 2001, adjacent to the combat-pistol qualification range we just completed."

Construction of a forward-area arming and refueling point that allows helicopter crews and ground support personnel to practice "hot" fueling operations has already begun.

Sims said soldiers from southern Europe are expected to take advantage of the training area when improvements are completed some time in 2004. The site will allow them to perform common tasks training and weapon qualification and preclude some of the deployments to Hohenfels.

"Recently, too, USAREUR picked our BSB as the firefighter training center," Sims said. All 16 base operation organizations train their firefighters at the 235th BSB's facility, which includes a mock-up helicopter with burners so fire emergency services

can train in putting out aircraft fires.

Illesheim

Even the small Illesheim community of 2,300, spread over about three miles, has schools, libraries and churches, Sims said. Its health clinic operates five days a week.

Nancy Castleman, a civilian nurse at the clinic, has lived in Germany for 20 years, and in Illesheim since 1996. "My dad was a soldier," she said. "And I was a soldier, from 1987 to 1992.

"Illesheim has its good and not-so-good points," she said. "There's little crime here, as compared to the larger communities. But because it's a little place, people experience some inconvenience. It's hard to complete errands during the week, for example, because things close at 4:30. We have a little PX and commissary."

On the other hand, "because we're so small, the waiting time for services, like medical care, is brief," Castleman said.

Whatever services Illesheim lacks can be found only a short drive away in Wuerzburg or Ansbach.

"The Army provides transportation between kasernes, too," said Castleman, whose 13-year-old son is bused to school in Ansbach, some 30 minutes away.

MAJ Denise Costa and her husband, CPT Steve Costa, live in government housing in Illesheim, "a beautiful, four-bedroom duplex," Denise said. He commutes to Wuerzburg, where he's head nurse at the medical surgical ward of Wuerzburg Army Hospital. She, a nurse at the Illesheim health clinic, takes the kids to daycare.

The Costas, who had recently arrived in Germany from Fort Rucker, Ala., were just beginning to explore their new home.

"There's an active corps of volunteers here," said 235th BSB fitness coordinator Sharon Morejon, who serves the Katterbach and Illesheim communities. "Parents coach soccer for the kids, run the haunted house for Halloween and plan community events to celebrate special occasions year-round.

"We work to incorporate fitness into people's lives, to get them out and involved," said Morejon, a part-time aerobics instructor. "We have volksmarching and ski clubs, among other offerings."

Morejon's husband, SGT Lorenzo Morejon, is assigned to the 58th Avn. Regt. in Katterbach.

"Within six months of arriving here he deployed to Bosnia. That's when I started teaching aerobics," Sharon said. "Most people I've met have a good, supportive outlook about deployments. And spouses who get involved in the community are



Children in Vilseck's Child Development Center - part of USAREUR's modern and well-staffed CDC system - await their after-recess snack.

OK."

"I brief every soldier who comes into the 235th BSB," Sims said. "I tell them my staff and I work to provide them and their families a mini-America in Germany, with as many of the services they're accustomed to in the states as possible.

"By the same token, I tell them: 'You are in Europe at Uncle Sam's expense. You're 25 minutes from the medieval city of Rothenburg, to which people come from around the world. You can drive to Austria in the morning and come back in time for dinner. Enjoy the country where you're fortunate enough to be assigned.'"

Aviation Brigade

BEFORE Christmas, CPT Thomas Styner and other 1st Aviation Regiment pilots and crew chiefs trained in Germany's alpine region.

They were preparing to deploy to Kosovo. Styner's AH-64-equipped Company B, 1st Battalion, 1st Avn., was preparing to replace the 2nd Bn.'s Co. A.

Earlier, Co. B completed a gunnery exercise at the Grafenwoehr training area, Styner said.

Because most of their flying is done at night, crews trained with night-vision goggles so they wouldn't have to depend solely on forward-looking infrared devices if the weather in Kosovo got really nasty.

"My soldiers have been working 12- to 14-hour days, because we could have been sent to Kosovo at any time," said battalion commander LTC David Abramowitz, current commander of the aviation task force in Kosovo, Task Force Gunfighter.

"In June and July 1999 we were practicing gunnery when we were pulled out to go to Kosovo. Then, military officials determined that they needed a lift capability more than an attack capability," said 1st Bn. 1SG Felipe Mendez. In late 1997, the 1st Bn. had deployed to Bosnia.

In November, Abramowitz's crews arrived in Kosovo, assuming control of eight Apaches; 10 UH-60 Black Hawks from the 2nd Bn., 1st Avn. Regt., in Ansbach; six medevac helicopters from Landstuhl, Germany; eight OH-58D Kiowa Warriors from the 4th Cavalry Regt. in Schweinfurt; six Apaches from the United Arab Emirates and four Ukrainian Mi-17 Hips, he said.

Today, Abramowitz's crews are getting some of their best training ever, he said. "They fly four times as much here as in Germany, because in Kosovo they're not pulled from their jobs to complete other details.

"In Kosovo, we're not focused on killing things. Our job is reconnaissance," Abramowitz said. -- Heike Hasenauer



The Illersheim-based 6th Battalion, 52nd Air Defense Artillery, is one of two Patriot missile battalions stationed in Germany.

[Back to the Top](#)

Contents

Features

[Duty in
Germany](#)

[Supporting
Soldiers and
Families](#)

[A Choice
Community](#)

[Würzburg High](#)

[The Army
Vision](#)

[Transforming
the Best Army
in the World](#)

[Focused on
Bosnia](#)

[Improving the
FMTV](#)

[Soldiers and the
FMTV:](#)

[Working Out the
Kinks](#)

[The FMTV
Pullout \(.pdf\)](#)

[The NTC
Support Team](#)



ENTER Wuerzburg High School in Germany and you'll encounter a typically American academic environment that has been enhanced by the advantages of its unique location and close contact with local communities.

"We have a twofold mission," said Principal Charlie Toth, "to address the kids' needs, including the 68 percent who intend to go on to college, and to establish a community environment that's stable, secure and the center of military life.

"I want people to say: 'My child goes to Wuerzburg High School, and I'm proud of it,'" said Toth. "Soldiers need to go wherever the Army sends them, assured that their kids' needs are being met by professionals within the Department of Defense school system.

"Among parents' primary concerns is child safety," Toth said. "That we're located on a military complex, secured by the military, is a tremendous asset." In the DOD school system since 1979, Toth has never known of a serious incident occurring anywhere within that system in Germany.

He's also never experienced kids in crisis because of deployments, he said. "There are always kids in crisis for other reasons -- because of breaking up with a boyfriend or girlfriend, for example -- things that we don't necessarily hear about.

"But our schools offer after-school programs, beyond athletics, that give kids opportunities to get involved in clubs or dance groups, so they're not home alone," he said.

Some 3,500 students from across Europe, representing international schools, host-nation schools and DOD schools, participate in a program called "Model United Nations."

The program allows them to play the roles of leaders, and debate and elect officials. They study parliamentary procedures and draft resolutions, Toth said. "Model U.S. Senate" is a similar program that allows students to explore the workings of politics and government.



Students - JROTC cadets among them - mingle in the hallway before classes begin at Würzburg High School.

"We offer creative connections, too, whereby students who demonstrate talent in the arts and drama can receive instruction from stateside experts," Toth said.

Every school in U.S. Army, Europe, has an academic team that competes against other schools for recognition as academic best. Each school gets funds to send students to areas relevant to particular studies.

Two years ago Wuerzburg High School began taking parent surveys, to gage similarities between schools in the states and schools in Germany, Toth said. "Those tell us that parents believe their children have more advantages over here."

Toth, who has three children in the DOD school system, said: "I'm ecstatic they're in the DOD schools. They've been given the opportunity to have the best education."

The high school accommodates some 575 students from grades nine through 12, including students who commute from Giebelstadt and Kitzingen, about 10 miles away, and Schweinfurt, about 16 miles away.

Each classroom also has computers with Internet access and extensive educational and technical software. Through the Community Education Center, seniors can take college-level courses while still in high school.

Additionally, to continue their education in Germany upon graduation, students can opt to attend the University of Maryland's Mannheim campus, a regular college campus with dormitories. The school was formerly in Munich.

[Back to the Top](#)